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### DANC 300.01: Contemporary Modern Dance Theory and Technique III

Nicole Bradley Browning

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**DANC 300 01: Contemporary Modern Dance Theory and Technique (3 credits)**  
**M/W/F 12noon-1:50 PM PARTV 005**  
**University of Montana School of Theatre & Dance Spring 2017**

**Instructor:** Professor Nicole Bradley Browning, nicole.bradleybrowning@umontana.edu  
**Office Hours:** Monday 9:45-11:15am, Wednesday 9-10:30am, PARTV 185

**Seeking clarity, presence, identity and passion in our dancing**  
**Course Description**

What are we doing when we dance? How do we trust our bodies when we dance? How do we move towards our fullest potential? Where are we sending our attention when we dance? How are we relating to our environment? How are we relating to our fellow dancers? How do we work on ourselves and with our community? What choices are we making in our dancing and why? What are we training for? What's at stake? Why should we increase our qualitative range? How does technique class provide a space for us to practice who we want to be and what we want to do in our world? What's the quality of our attention? How do we make space for research? How do we make space for discussion? How do we multitask? Can we listen, deeply?

This course challenges students to ask these questions as a springboard for discovery. What does it mean to be truly present when we dance? What does it mean to elicit our passion drive when we dance?

Students are encouraged to explore the course content independently and ask peer mentors and faculty questions when necessary. Students are encouraged to practice preferred learning strategies and experiment with new ways of learning. Students are encouraged to work towards clarity in movement choices and implement feedback from the instructor the class community. Students are expected to participate fully at all times, engage in play, learn from struggles/challenge/failure and find pleasure in the experience.

**Objectives:**

1. To experience and actively integrate dance practices offered through instruction. Improvisation and the use of imagery may be used to enable greater understanding of one's facility, alignment, limitations and freedom. To encourage students to consider: how does one honor and challenge her/his mind and body to advance one's dance practices?
2. To provide an outlet in which students are encouraged to advance, further develop and take responsibility for all of their capacities in movement. To encourage students to consider: what choice(s) does one make to dance with clarity, deepen her/his investigation of dance to further develop artistic voice?
3. To develop individual and group dance presence. To encourage students to consider: how does one fully embody and embrace her/his presence in the classroom, in performance, in peer exchange?
4. To provide an environment for students to demonstrate professionalism in the classroom.

**Course Content**

1. **The student will enhance her/his physical practice and artistry in contemporary modern dance by actively demonstrating and improving upon:**
  - Technique Criteria III (see in handbook), referencing demonstration of intermediate proficiency in developing technique, artistry and etiquette.
  - Improvisation techniques as relative to the content situated at the center of the curriculum;
  - Somatic practices offered in conjunction with the course content;
  - Intention and presence in solo and group work;
  - Choices one can make in the practice and performance of dance to further develop artistry and voice in the form including decisions regarding focal engagement.
  - Dedication to reviewing, rehearsing and reflecting upon class material between classes.
  - Completing in or out of class written responses provided by instructor.

**2. The student will develop her/his creative voice by:**

- Considering movement practices introduced and exercised in class and reimagining and restructuring specific movements, initiations, patterns of connectivity, phrases, improvisational structures to reflect artistic and technical inquiry relative to contemporary modern dance (this will be most evident in one's midterm and final presentation);
- Engage in collaborative work to deepen ongoing investigation related to movement practice;

**3. The student will, through dance, engage in her/his community by:**

- Participating in collaborative study, peer evaluation and constructive criticism;
- Exercising active inquiry in the classroom;
- Demonstrating a sense of investment, generosity, respect for the discovery of dance art as a vital part of the group;
- Encouraging further development in peers;
- Attend university and local dance events.

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED AT THE FOLLOWING DANCE CONCERTS:**

Students are required to see **three dance concerts** during the fall term and respond to **one concert** through written response (see below, or on Moodle). Students may choose from the following options:

❖ **Dancers on Location: A Site Specific Dance Concert:**

- Friday September 15<sup>th</sup> @ 5 PM, Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup> @ 12 Noon. Meet at the UM Mansfield Mall, Free!

❖ **Dance Up Close:**

- November 10 @ 7:30PM, November 11<sup>th</sup> @ 2PM and 7:30 PM, Masquer Theatre  
Tickets available at the UM Arts Box Office in the PARTV

❖ **Studio Works:**

- December 8<sup>th</sup> (Fri) program I at 6:30pm; program II at 8:30pm; Open Space, Tickets \$5 *at the door*

Your instructor MAY require attendance at additional concerts (see below), or choose to offer students a chance to use attendance as make ups for absences. This is at the discretion of each instructor.

❖ **Lovesong by Abi Morgan, directed by Bernadette Sweeney and produced by Bare Bait Dance.**

- OCT 20-22 @ 8pm, OCT 25-29 @ 8pm. BOUTIQUE HOUSE SHOW (location disclosed upon ticket purchase)

❖ **A Celebration Service choreographed by Meredith Monk and performed by the School of Theatre & Dance and School of Music:**

- November 3-4 @ 7:30 and 9:30 PM, UCC Missoula, 405 University Avenue.  
Ticket Prices \$12 Student, \$15 General Admission

**\*\*Note: When buying tix at the UMARTS Box Office, please be sure to tell the ticket agent that you are buying a required student ticket to ensure your discount. Bring your student ID.**

**Assignments:**

1. **Attendance:** Consistent and punctual attendance is required. Class begins promptly at 12 noon. Being on time to class means, entering the studio, ready to begin class 10 minutes early. Being prepared for class means arriving well-rested, nourished and hydrated. Students arriving late will not be permitted to take class. Class will end at 1:50PM. Students are required to remain in class until it finishes with the closing circle. Consistent departure from class before its end will result in lowering of one's grade.

Students are granted one absence for the WHOLE semester. Students may also make up one absence by watching, and writing a one-page observation of another dance class that is the approximate level and style of class that one is taking (level 2 or Bare Bait Dance Company Class). After a student has

used her/his one absence and one makeup, the student will be docked one-third of a grade for every absence following. If the student misses an entire week of class (3 classes), an entire letter grade is docked from the student's grade (that should not be assumed as an "A").

2. **Writing:** All written reflections and critiques are due through Moodle Assignments for this course.

- **Training Reflections:**

*Assignment 1: From where are we beginning this course of study and research?*

Reflecting on one's current dance accomplishments and goals can help the dancer gain deeper awareness of where one wants to go in the dance learning process. Furthermore, reflection can assist the dancer assess her/his learning, identifying areas of interest and challenges as well as identifying personal growth. In this first assignment, please reflect upon the following: In terms of contemporary dance technique **what you feel you already know** (considering important elements such as: line, form, alignment, body patterning, total body connectivity, integration, spatial awareness, rhythmic accuracy, phrasing, initiation and follow through, qualitative range, performance presence, identity), **what strengths you have to build upon**, and **what do you hope to achieve** throughout the course of the semester? Due September 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Assignment 2: Midterm Discoveries*

Following the review of the midterm assignment film (October 13<sup>th</sup>), please reflect on the following questions: What discoveries have you made? Have you identified new ways of moving, sensations of movement or alternate approaches to how you move (in short, what's new)? What challenges are you encountering? What are recurring challenges you experience in class? What tools do you have to work through these challenges? What tools do you wish to acquire to help you continue your development? What are specific improvements you have identified? How are you approaching technique class to maximize development? How can you describe the level of personal responsibility you are taking for your growth and development in dance? What do you hope to achieve before the conclusion of the term? Please choose to reflect upon the questions that will yield in the most valuable reflection at this time. Due October 16<sup>th</sup>.

*Assignment 3: Final Reflection*

Following the performance and review of your final assignment film (December 8<sup>th</sup>), please reflect upon the following: How much do you feel you have grown? In what areas have you identified improvement? How has your thinking about dance and dance technique changed, or evolved? What have you learned about technical strengths/weaknesses, efficiency, strength, investment in personal discovery, the relationship between somatic practices->improvisation->technique and performance, and expression of creative voice through the work completed in the classroom? What are your personal goals for next term? Due December 11<sup>th</sup>.

- **Critique:** Please see critique guidelines available on Moodle. Critiques are due one week following attendance to the dance concert for which you are authoring a response.

3. **Midterm (October 13<sup>th</sup>), Final Movement Project (December 8<sup>th</sup>):** At the midterm and the end of the term, students will perform material from class that may be comprised of specific movement, practices or research experienced through the course of this semester. Details forthcoming.

**Grading:** Final grades are determined in the following way:

- **Physical Practice and Artistry (55 points):** Overall understanding and demonstration of movement principles emphasized and studied in class, investment in material, creative signature demonstrated in material and artistry described in one's dancing.

- **Writing** (15 points each): Papers are evaluated with respect to thoroughness, clarity, depth of analysis and grammatical structure.
- **Final Project** (15 points): Projects are graded with respect to performance, artistry, creativity, risk taking, demonstration of class principles and investment in the process and product.

\* Students may receive an “incomplete” (I) only if there are exceptional circumstances that have been discussed with the instructor.

### Injury

Please notify the instructor of any injury (current or past) that may affect your full performance in class. See injury policy (located on Moodle) for specific considerations.

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## **Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/vpesa/Dean%20of%20Students/default.php>.

### **All syllabi for Theatre & Dance courses imply the understanding:**

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance *Student Handbook*. The *Handbook* is available online at <http://www.umt.edu/umarts/theatredance/About/handbook.php>.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop time, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance do so at their own risk.

Due to safety considerations, at **no** point during a student’s time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student **without our consent**. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student’s grade.

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**NO street shoes are allowed in the dance studio at any time, even carried in-hand.** Anyone entering the studio must remove their street shoes **BEFORE** entering and leave them outside the studio. The only shoes permitted in studios are those that have been purchased for the exclusive use of dance in dance studios (with the exclusion of tap shoes, hard-shoe clogs, and flamenco shoes. These should never be worn on Marley floors).

Individuals concerned about theft should rent a locker for their shoes and other belongings.

**NO** food or drinks (except water in closed bottles) are permitted in the dance studios or theatres.

NOTE: **Locker rentals** are available for any student. The School of Theatre & Dance recommends that students do not leave personal belongings unattended in the dressing rooms, hallways, dance studios, or theatres as **thefts frequently occur**. Lockers may be rented for \$10/one semester or \$15/two semesters through Administrative Associate IV Sharon Collins ([sharon1.collins@umontana.edu](mailto:sharon1.collins@umontana.edu); PARTV 194).

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### **From the EO/AA Office:**

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental

alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <http://life.umd.edu/dss/>.

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I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the syllabus on this date \_\_\_\_\_ and understood the information presented about this course. My signature documents an agreement to adhere to these policies.